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KASHMIR – The virus of Political Islam- Is it inspired by Wahabi Jihad?

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This paper makes out a case that the Kashmir problem is primarily rooted to the Jihadi ideology and religio-separatism of political Islam.

In the modern history of Kashmir, despite repeated dialogues since 1947, the Kashmir problem related to political Islam is still unresolved. The political leadership in Delhi has apparently failed to achieve any fruitful solution. Even the Rajya Sabha resolution on this issue adopted on August 10 recently also seems to be an addition to another crisis management formula to pacify the protesters in the valley temporarily.

The Islamic history of Kashmir suggests that the gentle version of this faith laced with pre-Islamic practices in the region with heavy influence of Sufi mysticism remained at the centre of the cultural and spiritual life and therefore the larger majority of them are still the followers of the Sufi version of Islam. In fact, the Islamic stream which came to Kashmir through Persian route got diluted in the cultural cauldron of Hinduism. This cultural fusion was known as Kashmiriyat.

Enter Wahabism in the Valley:

But after the entry of Wahhabism in the valley, the descendants of the Islamist invaders are now set to hegemonise Kashmiriyat under a very small Arab component in the veil of 'Azadi'. These fringe elements or separatist group that are primarily rooted to their foreign lineage don't have any racial fraternity with the Muslims of Kashmir ancestry who are born and brought up in the gentler version of Kashmiriyat.

Contrary to this cultural identity of the locals, the separatists had Jihadi narratives of Kashmiriyat which they linked with Wahhabi version of Islam that is totally opposed to the tomb worship tradition of the people. Ironically, these separatists are sending their own children for study

in big cities out of Kashmir while using other children as their foot soldiers to carry on their designs within Kashmir. The soft line approach of the mainstream politicians towards the separatists has gradually turned the situation from bad to worse and has now emboldened the patrons of jihadi outfits both across the border as well in Kashmir to campaign for the hard line version of the faith to grow day by day.

While carrying the mental load of the medieval version of Islam, this fringe group in the valley facilitated the import of Saudi funded version of hard-line Islam known as Wahhabism. Over the years emergence of Madrasas and mosques under the control of Wahhabi Mullahs and support of a section of power hungry native nobles as also with a little help of Pakistan were able to mobilise a section of local youths for spreading jihadi doctrine in the name of 'azadi' and that is the root cause behind the unrest in the valley today.

The Kashmir Problem- Is it political or religious?

To understand this problem of Kashmir which is not a political but religious, one has to look into the Saudi-Wahhabi imperialistic design in the Muslim world particularly in the Indian sub-continent. With the Islamist's conquest starting from Arabian Peninsula to the ongoing terror war against the Crusaders, Jews, Sufi Muslims and Hindus, the desert warriors who never tried to understand the rational world view of love, peace and co-existence took civilisational evolution to be the history of conflict and cruelty. Accordingly, they never reconciled with the non-Islamic power anywhere in the world.

Shah Waliullah and Abd al-Wahab are two sides of the same coin:

Emergence of two Islamist reformers of eighteenth century namely Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) in India and Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1787) in Arabian Peninsula re-ignited the medieval fire of Islamism among the Muslims. While studying together in Medina they came up with a considered view that Islam will not survive without political power and suggested an aggressive drive for revival of hard-line conservative Islamism as the only solution to stop the sliding decline of the glory of Islamic power in Indian sub-continent. Although, the two reformers had some tactical differences over execution of their common goal to achieve Pan-Islamic Arab imperialism in the world, both of them are known as the co-founders of political Islam.

Waliullah, the follower of Hanafi school of Sunni Islam which is in majority in this region was upset with the rise of Maratha power and the fading glory of Mogul Empire and therefore, tried to unite the Muslim society by establishing concordance between the conflicting schools of Islamic thought and also presented an integrated view of the different branches of Islamic schools. His plan was to unite the different Islamist warlords of Indian sub-continent to crush those who challenged the Islamic rule in this region. He was the one who invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to India in 1760.

Contrary to the tactical compromise formula of Waliullah with Shia and other tomb worshipping Muslims, Wahhab being the follower of Hanbali School of Islam and a hard core Sunni cleric treated the tomb worshippers as infidels. His sole objective was to Saudi-ise the

Muslim society by pushing them to the extreme Arabic tradition and to bring them under a single command of a Bedouin Saudi warlord Mohammad ibn Saud with whom he had an agreement in 1744. Since then, the successors of Ibn Saud while pursuing Wahhabism and unjustly claiming as sole upholder of Islam emerged as a force in Arabian Peninsula from the beginning of eighteenth century.

While Wahhab in alliance with Mohammad Ibn Saud laid the foundation stone of the Saudi Kingdom, Waliullah mobilized the Muslims in India against infidels! The success of the Jihadi concept of political Islam in defeat of Marathas in 1762 and rise of Saudi-Wahhabi alliance as an independent kingdom left a deep Jihadi dent on the psyche of the Muslim society of Indian sub-continent.

Emergence of Saudi-Wahhabi dominance after the collapse of the Caliphate:

After the collapse of the institution of Caliphate under Ottoman Empire in mid-twenties of the last century when the Saudi-wahhabi monarchy became the self-made custodian of the two holiest shrine of Islam, the latter with its design for dominance over the Muslim world started challenging the non-wahhabi Muslim region by exporting puritanical version of faith known as Wahhabism. It's emergence as a richest oil exploring country further added to its lust particularly when the spade work for hard line Islam was already initiated in India by Shah Waliullah(1703-1762) and pursued by his son Shah Abdul Aziz (1745-1823)'s disciple Syed Ahmad Bareilvi((1786-1831), and Deoband movement which was identical to the hard-line Islam similar to Wahhabism.

After successful entry of Wahhabism in Pakistan, the petro-dollar giant Saudi Arabia accelerated its Islamist mission in India by making Kashmir as its operational zone. With increase of Saudi funded madrasas and mosques in Kashmir, wahhabism posed a strategic challenge to India. It is said that out of nearly 8 million Muslim population in Kashmir, Wahhabi claims to have indoctrinated 1.5 million of them (<http://pulitzercenter.org/projects/kashmir-india-pakistan-sufi-wahhabi-i...> [1]).

The death of Burhan Wani is incidental to the rise of Wahhabi influenced Jihad:

Actually, the recent increase in the mass terror attack in Kashmir particularly after the killing of Pakistan trained Kashmiri Burhan Wani followed by violent protests and demonstration by a group of native youths against security forces is an intrinsic part of militant Wahhabi jihad against India with its operational headquarters in Kashmir. It has been a long term strategy of the Islamists to restore Muslim rule in Indian sub-continent under the imperialistic control of Saudi Arabia for which the latter has been pumping huge money for propagation of wahhabi ideology and Jihadi invasion in Kashmir since 1947 itself.

The plan of wahhabi is to first wahhabise the Sufi influenced Muslim populace of Kashmir and then use them for transformation of their co-religionists in rest of India to hard-line Islam. The protracted movement for the restoration of the lost Muslim rule in the region by the pro-Wahhabi Deobandi, Jamaat-e-Islami, Tablique Jamaat and other hard-line Islamist organisations, and individuals like Zakir Naik and Owaisis under the patronage of vote greedy Indian political parties has already done the spade work to facilitate the extension of militant Jihad from

Kashmir to the rest of India. Making successful inroads in Kashmir valley since 1990 which is said to be due to heavy inflow of foreign funds particularly from Saudi Arabia, Wahhabi Mullhas propagated the term 'azadi' sponsored by Pakistan which is nothing but a politico-religious militancy supported only by a small section of the locals. Over 70% of Kashmiri Muslims particularly in countryside are still the followers of Sufi Islam and they are against this so called 'azadi' movement.

Politicians Messing up the "Real Issue":

It is unfortunate that some politicians instead of understanding the changing nature of the protests have been issuing sympathetic statements in favour of the protestors.

The statement J & K Chief Minister in a convention of her party PDP in Srinagar on July 28 that "she would not let their sacrifices go waste" could be misunderstood and taken to mean as support to the terrorists

Former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's comment that "Burhan's grave would act as the new galvanising factor in the valley" only further provoked the stone pelting youths to continue their depredations against the law and order agencies. More unfortunate was his statement in a press conference on August 17 that "Pakistan is not the architect" of the present crisis. Was he not aware of the origin of the present crisis or was he angling for political/religious support in future elections? What is forgotten is that Burhan Wani was the leader of a terrorist group waging war against the establishment.

Except the area of Kashmir valley which constitutes not more than eight percent of the total area of J & K state, rest of the region namely Ladakh and Jammu are peaceful. The Hindu majority Jammu, the Buddhist Ladakh and Shia Muslim majority Kargil have in fact never demanded 'azadi'. Even in Kashmir valley only a small section of its population under the patronage of Saudi funded guidance from Pakistan is impacted by the virus of so called azadi in general and Burhan Wani syndrome in particular. Truly speaking, only this small section serves as the nursery of Jihadi terror under the supervision of wahhabi Mullhas, and the separatists combine. Ironically, both the regional parties in the state namely the National Conference and the PDP hardly dealt with the anti-national role of this combine firmly.

Despite the fact that the problem of Kashmir is confined to only the eight percent area of the entire state and not the whole of the State of J & K, some of the valley politicians have been propagating that the whole of the J & K is demanding for a political solution for the present crisis.

Against the wahhabisation strategy of the Kashmiri Muslims under the cover of their so called demand for 'Azadi' being perpetrated by Pakistan, silence of the moderate forces of the valley based political parties against the wahhabi militants is intriguing. Haven't they realised that it will be seen as connivance with the separatist outfits and being exploited by Pakistan?

What dialogue and with Whom? With the Wahabi inspired Jihadists?

J & K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has urged the Prime Minister to revive the dialogue process on Kashmir initiated by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Spelling out her mind, she said, "... there has to be a political solution which can be reached by involving all stakeholders". Vajpayee's dialogue process was to win over the hearts and minds of the Kashmiris. But this dialogue hardly ended in any conclusive result. Moreover, Mehbooba's suggestion favouring political solution to a Wahhabi problem in Kashmir is contradictory and does not reflect the ground situation. Burhan Wani was a Jihadi terrorist fighting in Kashmir under the banner of Islam and he was commemorated as martyr in Pakistan and by the separatists in Kashmir when he was killed on July 8.

Solution

Since Kashmir problem is primarily rooted to the Jihadi ideology and religio-separatism of political Islam, its solution lies only in neutralisation of this ideology partly ideologically and partly militarily by isolating the fringe elements in the Kashmir valley that had started an aggressive campaign of Jihadi ideology in the region since the eighties in the last century when the Jihadis became jobless after defeating the Soviet army in Afghanistan.

Ever since the entry of Islam in the region it got diluted in the pre-Islamic socio-cultural cauldron of the diverse religious groups in the state which was known as Kashmiriyat that is 'inclusive Islam'. But, the term was misinterpreted by the Wahabi patrons as a political term and raised the issue of 'Azadi' which is not endorsed by the larger majority of its people.

The separatists have used this term only to befool the uneducated population of this state. If the term Kashmiriyat is taken seriously it will have its implication in other regions of the state on the similar plea of Laddakhiyat, Jammuiyat and Kargiliyat which are religiously different from Kashmir valley.

Contrary to the pre-Wahhabi meaning of the term Kashmiriyat, Wahhabisation or religious radicalisation of Muslims has been a new phenomenon in the state that must be tackled on a war footing (Retired Maj. Gen. Afsir Karim - <http://www.asianage.com/india/wahhabi-preachers-new-threat-peace-jammu-a...> [2]). He said, "Pakistan has been inducting a large number of Wahhabi preachers in the valley, who are exhorting Kashmiri Muslims to give up their moderate Sufi culture and fight to establish Sharia laws. This movement is the vanguard of a new phase of war sought to be waged by the people" (Ibid.).

Although the moderate Kashmiris are the custodian of Kashmiriyat, they are incapable of generating violent movement in fighting back the violent Wahabis. Therefore, the state government with the support of the centre must launch an aggressive counter –ideological movement to neutralise the Wahabis and save Kashmiriyat. The World Sufi conference held in Delhi in last March has already launched a counter

movement against Deoband school of Sunni Islam known as a representative organisation of Wahabism but to fight them back in Kashmir is primarily the duty of the local Muslims with the support of the political leadership of the state. According to some report 70% of Kashmiri Muslims are still the followers of the Sufi brand of Islam. If they get the support of the political leadership it may not be difficult to neutralise the Wahabis.

Let the Islamic scholars in rest of India who believe in the gentler version of Islam give an aggressive ideological support to the Kashmiris in their fight against Wahhabism. They should rather take a lead in association with Sufi Ulema and organise a debate in Kashmir under the protection of security forces and adopt a resolution to reject the Wahhabi version of Islam and convince the people to counter the whhabi influenced smaller group in the valley who are under the roll of Pakistan. Any cognizance to the Pakistan sponsored Wahhabi voice of local youths means allowing Kashmir to march towards the anarchy like Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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